

THE

BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

VOL. XLVIII.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 1853.

No. 10.

EPIDEMIC OF 1852 IN NEWTON.

BY EDWARD WARREN, M.D.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

WHILE the influenza was prevailing in the winter of 1851-1852, I was called to a succession of cases, occurring at distinct intervals and in different localities, which varied in many particulars from any which I had previously seen.

CASE I.—The first case occurred Dec. 19, 1851. A young lady—who had gone to attend a female patient who was recovering from a severe attack of pleurisy, and who was also subject to eczema—was suddenly seized with chills and vomiting, accompanied with severe headache, redness of the face, and some other symptoms, which led her to suppose she had erysipelas—a very severe attack of which she had formerly experienced. She was very much depressed.

I saw her a few hours after the attack. Her countenance was very much flushed. Face but little if any swollen; of a deep scarlet hue, something between that of scarlet fever and of erysipelas. I found her sitting in her parlor. She had violent headache, nausea, tongue thickly coated, slight sore throat, breath very foul. Pulse *slower* than natural. Voice strong and muscular, strength good. I directed her to go to bed, and take an emetic of ipecac., to be followed with Dover's powders. Her face to be bathed with lead-water.

Dec. 20th.—I found her greatly improved. Redness of countenance nearly gone; headache relieved; pulse as yesterday.

21st.—Sitting up. Redness remains only on one side of the nose. I found it only necessary to regulate her diet, and caution her against exposure or exertion. She had no return of the affection. The attack was attended, throughout the whole, with foul breath and foul perspiration.

CASE II.—The second case took place in this village, about three miles from the location of the former. Mrs. ———, a young married lady, of poor health, who had recently lost a child, and who had also been much in attendance upon a person very ill with typhoid fever, was seized in the night, after a hearty supper, with symptoms similar to those described above.

She had violent headache, nausea and retching; with pain in the side, which she supposed to be pleuritic. She could not, however, fix the

spot. There was erythematous redness of the face, unattended with swelling. Pulse *slower* than natural, skin cool and feet cold. I prescribed a blister to the side, opiates for the relief of the pain, and lead-water to the face. Her state of previous ill health led me to avoid more powerful medicine.

Dec. 11th.—Much better. Redness of the face gone. Pain in chest gone. Some pain in bowels. Pulse much as yesterday. Breathing easier. Breath and perspiration foul.

By the third day, the redness of the face was entirely gone. She became able to sit up, and in a few days was about her household avocations. My attendance ceased on the 15th. Imprudence in diet and exertion brought on another attack, more severe than the preceding, about January 1st. There was no redness of the face, and the pain was more definitely confined to the bowels.

As the symptoms were severe, and attended with vomiting, &c., I thought it best to give ipecac., which I had avoided in the first attack, in consequence of her previous impaired health. Croton oil was applied to the bowels; elixir of opium for the relief of the pain. She recovered slowly from this attack, but again relapsed from a similar cause, and finally, by her husband's desire, returned to a homœopathist whom she had formerly employed. By the most rigid enforcement of rest, and seclusion from visitors and excitement, she eventually recovered, and by spring was able to walk out.

CASE III.—The sister of the above, Mrs. ———, who had also watched with the fever patient above alluded to, and who had been in attendance upon her, now became ill. She employed the same homœopathist as her sister. On the second or third day of her attack, I was informed that she was covered with an eruption or rash, which resembled poisoning by ivy or dogwood. I believe that no name was given to the disease. She had a lingering illness and a tedious recovery.

CASE IV.—Jan. 9th, I was called to visit a child, about three quarters of a mile from the location of the last two cases. It had been suddenly seized, in the night, with what the parents regarded as symptoms of scarlet fever; violent tossing in bed; intense redness of the skin; some vomiting.

I found the whole surface covered with deep red; no sore throat; pulse languid. The child lively, and apparently not very sick. The absence of sore throat, the slowness of the pulse, and the darkish hue of the rash, led me to pronounce decidedly that it was not scarlet fever. I prescribed an emetic of ipecac, to be followed with Dover's powder. The next morning the rash was gone, and the child was well! In this case, as well as in the others which precede and follow, a roughness of the skin was left, such as succeeds ordinary attacks of erysipelas.

All these cases were sporadic, some occurring in Newton, and some in West Needham, at distances of from half a mile to three miles apart.

Some cases now appeared in one family in Weston, distant from any of the others, and directly traceable to contagion.

In January or February, the principal of a neighboring female seminary, after suffering for some time from influenza, had an attack of a

disease which presented, as I am informed, some very obscure symptoms, but was at first considered as typhoid, and subsequently as typhus fever. He died after a fortnight's illness, and several of the young ladies in the house were attacked with severe symptoms considered as influenza.

CASE V.—Miss ——— was very severely attacked at night, with symptoms of fever, violent pain in the head and back, nausea, &c. She was treated homœopathically, and in a day or two was able to come home. I found her languid, depressed, and very much in the state which some forty years ago was called slow fever; ten years subsequently, dyspepsia; and of late years, typhoid fever.

She was able to walk about house, and to ride and walk out. The only tangible symptoms were foul breath and foul perspiration, languor and depression. My principal prescription was elixir vitriol and gentle exercise in the open air. Two of her brothers were shortly after attacked in the same way. Violent headache, nausea, foul breath and foul perspiration, were the principal symptoms. They recovered without medical treatment.

CASES VI. and VII.—The mother was next attacked in a similar manner. She recovered and resumed her daily occupations, but after a week of great anxiety and exertion, about family concerns, a much more violent attack came on, and I was sent for.

Feb. 23d.—I found her sitting up in bed, moving her body backward and forward; face slightly swollen, very red, and headache intense. I prescribed an emetic, elixir vitriol as a drink, and an opiate at night.

On the succeeding night I was called to her, as she had had repeated attacks of vomiting and pain in the bowels. She and her family were greatly alarmed. After the application of a mustard poultice, and one or two doses of elixir of opium, the vomiting ceased, and she became more comfortable.

24th.—Much as yesterday; sitting up in bed; headache continues, but nausea and pain in the bowels have not returned. Is much depressed. Breath and perspiration very offensive. The face is less swollen. I prescribed the continuance of opiates for the relief of pain in the head and elsewhere, elixir vitriol in water as a drink, a laxative when required. Diet farinaceous.

This morning I was requested to prescribe for the remaining son, who was suddenly seized with all the same symptoms. I prescribed an emetic of ipecac. The next day I found him entirely relieved. He kept house for a day or two, as a matter of precaution, but had no further trouble.

Mrs. ——— after this gradually improved; her headache and the redness of the face subsided. During her convalescence, she took fifteen drops of elixir of vitriol three times a-day, and appeared to be greatly benefited by it. In the early part of her illness, it gave more immediate relief—not to the pain, but to the other unpleasant symptoms—than anything else. She subsequently expressed her conviction that she had been very dangerously ill, and stated that she had felt an entire disgust to life. She was so much convinced of the unusual character of the sickness, that she came to the conclusion that the disease which

had been brought to her house from the seminary, and which had caused the death of the principal, was ship fever.

Some months after this, in November of the same year, she was attacked with a disorder of a similar character, commencing with chills and all other symptoms precisely similar. A description of this attack will be given hereafter.

I may state that in all these cases there was a want of tangible symptoms. I could find nothing to explain satisfactorily the suffering of the patient, nor his own conviction of the severity of his case.

Two cases now occurred, about a mile distant from the locality of those last mentioned, of more serious character. I doubt whether I should class them with the above. The symptoms in the onset of each, however, precisely resembled those of Case IV.

CASES VIII. and IX.—Feb. 14th. I was called to see a boy about 2 years old, supposed to have symptoms of scarlet fever. He was taken suddenly in the night with chills and vomiting. I found him covered with an erythematous flush, of rather a dark scarlet; tongue much coated, pulse slow. *No sore throat*; on the whole, resembling precisely, as I have said, Case No. IV. I should premise that his grandfather had an attack, Dec. 18th; his grandmother, Dec. 24th; and his mother, January 12th; similar to those above described, and confining them to their beds three or four days each. A transient erythematous flush, foul breath and foul perspiration, slow pulse, headache, depression without muscular debility, were the main characteristics in each. The mother was most severely affected. She had great redness of the surface, and severe pain in the bowels, to which she had been previously subject.

In addition to his other symptoms, the boy had a stiffness of the muscles of the neck. I prescribed for him an emetic, to be followed by Dover's powders.

Feb. 15th.—More comfortable. Swallows readily, but complains of soreness upon the left side of the neck. Some swelling there. I applied solution of sal. ammoniac, in vinegar, to the neck.

16th.—Tumor has increased; breathes badly; very restless, with some delirium in the night. I prescribed bread and milk poultices to the neck; Dover's powders every four hours; and a mixture of muriatic acid with confection of roses every four hours alternately. He seemed relieved by this treatment; the tumor pointed, and soon began to discharge, when he became at once quite easy. He continued slowly to improve, and soon became able to sit up a little, and to take broth, beef-tea, and finally a little meat. The Dover's powders were gradually omitted, but the acid continued.

In the mean time his sister, about 4 years old—a very interesting child—was attacked in a similar manner. Great redness of the whole surface of the body, foul breath and perspiration, seemed the principal symptoms, when I saw her. I found her lying upon the sofa, free from pain, and apparently but little sick. In these two cases, as in the others mentioned, the muscular strength was good and the voice natural. The first onset had been severe, but she was relieved at the time of my visit.

She continued for about three days nearly the same. On the third day she was removed into the chamber with her brother—a room about 8 feet by 10, but ventilated by an open fire-place. This evening she began to breathe badly, but still had no difficulty in swallowing.

24th.—About 3, P.M., severe croupy breathing came on, attended with great distress. I found her sitting upon her mother's knee, quite rational. She submitted very readily to an application of the solution of nitrate of silver to her throat. This was repeated two or three times, and all the usual remedies were resorted to; but to no purpose. She died about 9 o'clock the next morning.

The boy was now doing so well, that I intermitted my visits for a day or two. It had been judged expedient to remove him from the chamber, when his sister became more ill. He was carried to the lower part of the house, and not confined to one room.

On visiting him again, I found him sitting up and dressed, but more feeble than before. His nurse, with the idea of getting him on faster, had indulged his appetite too freely. The excitement and exposure of the funeral, the opening of doors, and the seeing many people, had undoubtedly an unfavorable effect. He was now in a low typhoid state. I prescribed nitrous ether, quinine, and subsequently wine; beef-tea or broth to be given at regular intervals. He was precisely in the state that occurs after scarlet fever or dysentery, where the disease has been removed, and the child literally starves to death, not from want of nourishment, but because the organs of nutrition can no longer do their duty. He died on the fourth of March.

At the time these children were attacked, there was no case of scarlet fever in the neighborhood, nor had they been exposed to it in any way that could be traced.

CASE X.—A child in a neighboring house was attacked with similar symptoms; chills, erythema, &c. I prescribed an emetic, and the next day the redness, or rash, was gone, and the child was well!

CASES XI. and XII.—In the next house, however, closely adjoining the one in which the fatal cases had occurred, three children were seized with similar symptoms. One had them very slightly; the next, a little worse; the third, an infant, severely. It had little sore throat, but a stiffness of the neck and external swelling. For the relief of this swelling, and thinking it important to promote speedy action, I prescribed a bread and milk poultice. The parents demurred. The grandmother advised the substitution of a rind of pork. The parents proposed a consultation, either with a homœopathist, or with a very respectable practitioner, not a member of the Massachusetts Medical Society. I declined, on the ground that one medical man was sufficient for the case. Dr. T—— was sent for, and very judiciously compromised matters by prescribing hog's lard for the neck; and the good old remedy of black-currant jelly, to be taken inside. The tumor, like that of surgical celebrity, touched by the dead man's hand, was instantly relieved, and, in thirty-six hours, had disappeared. The patient was long ill, but eventually recovered.

The gentleman who treated the last-mentioned case, as also a young

medical amateur, who, I believe, saw the preceding fatal cases several times, expressed no doubt that the disease was scarlet fever. Whether scarlet fever or not, no other cases occurred in the neighborhood. My reason for classing it with the disorder described in the other cases, is that the eruption differed from that of scarlet fever; there was no evidence of sore throat; the swellings on the neck were entirely external; in short, the whole symptoms were those of the prevailing epidemic. I believe, too, that croup rarely succeeds scarlet fever; but croupy breathing may be the result of erysipelas.

The next case it may also be considered improper to class with the foregoing. Whether of the same genus or not, however, or whether it may be considered one of softening of the brain induced by typhoid fever several years previous, there can be little doubt that it was modified and accelerated by epidemic influence, and partook in a great degree the character of the others. The former cases I saw within a few hours after the attack, and before any medical treatment was resorted to. This one I saw much later, and cannot tell whether there was any definite onset of the symptoms, or whether the chills and erythema which attended the other attacks took place in this.

CASE.—April 10th, I was requested to visit a young lady who, I was told, was rapidly “running down.” I was informed that she had an attack of typhoid fever four years since, which had nearly proved fatal. She had a very slow recovery, and had never regained her health. For some time past she had evinced an entire lassitude, and want of interest in everything, with an utter dislike to exertion of every kind. No appetite. One period she had just passed without menstruation.

She walked into the parlor where I was waiting for her; though evidently with great exertion, and unfit to be off her bed. She was of sallow complexion, and presented the symptoms noticed in Case V. There was some cough; but I found, on examination, no physical signs of pulmonary disease. The cough was slight and dry; of a nervous or irritative character. The general appearances were those of slow typhoid fever. Understanding, at first, that the cough was the principal subject of alarm, I prescribed an expectorant, and the muriate of iron as a tonic.

Upon my next visit, I found that she had an aversion to all common food, and had frequent attacks of vomiting. She had foul breath and offensive perspiration. The cough was not troublesome. She had, at times, pain in the back part of the head; and sometimes in the back. Excessively nervous and sensitive. Some fulness of the bowels.

Finding that the iron and the expectorant could not be borne, and that all food produced vomiting, I gave her an emetic of ipecac., and afterwards elixir vitriol in water. This she took for some time without difficulty. When I found her in bed, she lay upon her back, perfectly still and motionless, the knees often drawn up; never speaking voluntarily, and answering a question only after a long interval and with great apparent effort of mind; as if the organs were too sluggish to convey and to answer the efforts of the will. There was fulness of the bowels, as I have stated, but no particular pain on pressure, even when she complained of

pain there. She rejects all common food. Either medicine or food produces vomiting. She had, also, for some successive evenings, what were described as violent "nervous" attacks; that is to say, paroxysms of shaking violently the whole body. Sometimes I found her with her feet drawn up in bed, and a restless motion of the lower limbs.

For the soreness of the bowels, I prescribed the external application of croton oil; a favorite prescription of my friend, Dr. Hosmer.

She manifested no improvement. Her appetite was capricious; her mind dwelling upon what she should eat, rejecting all wholesome articles of food, but eager for whatever was denied her. Dandelions were earnestly craved for; and when allowed, eaten for a few days with relish, but soon became disgusting. Her principal desire was, and had been for some time before I saw her, a mixture of butter and vinegar.

I was encouraged, for some time, to think that the disease might be mimetic, or sympathetic. The absence of the menses, the capricious appetite, and many other symptoms, favored the idea. A physician in full practice in Boston, to whom I stated the case, gave this opinion.

Having tried creosote to check the vomiting; quinine, and every other remedy, calculated either to relieve the nausea or to give tone to the system, I tried Port wine and Madeira, both of which were rejected. I next resorted to brandy, which was retained (perhaps because the vomiting stage was past). Under its use she became able to bear a little nourishment. Costiveness existed through the whole course of the disease. To obviate it, I employed injections of oatmeal gruel. I presume that this answered in some degree the place of nourishment by the mouth. This method of nourishing the system, where food cannot be taken by the mouth, is well known. Brandy was taken for about a week, and apparently with good effect. She had no vomiting, bore nourishment better, but did not improve in strength.

May 18th, thirty-eight days from the time of my first visit, she evinced such signs of cerebral disease, that I requested Dr. Hosmer, of Watertown, might be sent for in consultation. He arrived in the afternoon, and made rather a rail-road visit, but agreed that the principal disease was now in the brain. He advised croton oil to the back of the neck, and continued doses of calomel or blue pill.

She was somewhat roused from her dormant state by the consultation, and anxious to know the result. She had received the idea that by proposing a consultation, I wished to abandon her case as hopeless. She seemed encouraged by the communication, that though in great danger, we did not yet consider her situation desperate. The next day she seemed a little brighter. For a week longer she continued nearly in the same state. There was torpor or hebitude of the brain; but no aberration of intellect. The mental and the moral powers were retained, but they were torpid, as if under the effect of a narcotic. After this, she became more dull; though neither delirium nor stupor could be said to take place. She slowly sunk, and died May 28th, ten days after my consultation with Dr. Hosmer.

It has been so little the custom, in this neighborhood, to make post-mortem examinations, that in the case of a young lady like this, it was out

of the question. I had no doubt in my own mind that there was softening of the brain. Disease had undoubtedly been progressing there for a long period of time. The prevailing miasm had accelerated its course.

The resemblance of this case to one of more undoubted character, occurring the present season, has been one additional reason for my describing it here. I may also state that in a post-mortem examination I made upon the body of a boy about five years since, in Boston, during the prevalence of the dysentery as an epidemic, I found the brain of the consistency of curdled milk. The attending physician mentioned to me no other symptoms, but those of disease of the bowels. Some symptoms of peculiar character had, however, occurred, within two years previous, and the mother desired me especially to examine the brain. On opening the skull, the contents, which were greatly distended, fairly splashed upon the floor, and were, as I have said, of the consistency of curdled milk. Here was a case where the patient had retained in a degree his mental faculties, and died, not of the cerebral disease, but of the reigning epidemic.

In a future number of the *Journal* I hope to describe the epidemic of the present season, similar to that of 1852, but in a more developed and serious form.

Were I driven to seek a name for this, I would choose that of "irritative fever," to designate a variety of a species which has nearly synonyms enough to fill a page in the *Medical Journal*.

Newton Lower Falls, March, 1853.

ADULTERATION OF DRUGS.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—Among the various subjects brought to the consideration of the American Association, that of the adulteration of drugs is of the first importance. I believe the credit of first suggesting a national measure for the arrest of this evil, belongs to the New York College of Pharmacy. Nothing, however, was done effectually until the meeting of the American Medical Society at Baltimore, in 1848, when sundry resolutions were offered, resulting in a memorial to Congress, by which we are in possession of the existing law. Of the distinguished gentlemen prominent in bringing forward a measure so fraught with blessings to the community at large, were Dr. T. O. Edwards, of Ohio, then an eminent member of the House of Representatives, and at present a professor in one of the western colleges; Dr. C. C. Cox, a prominent member from Maryland, formerly a professor in one of the Philadelphia colleges; and Dr. Usher Parsons, of Rhode Island, a physician of admitted note and worth. The two last mentioned, in connection with the celebrated Dr. J. W. Francis, of New York, were made a committee to draft and report the memorial. At this lapse of time we recall, with much gratification, having had the honor of a seat in the convention, the general interest manifested in a subject, which, regarded in every point of view, was a most

fitting topic for discussion in the early history of the National Society. The gentlemen previously mentioned were eloquent in vindication of the proposed action, making, in the course of their speeches, the most startling disclosures of frauds committed by the producer, foreign trader, and home manufacturer and vender. The resolution of Dr. Cox, of Maryland, found on page 31 of the printed proceedings of 1848, while it furnishes evidence of the superior sagacity of that distinguished gentleman, points to the remedy demanded at this time in view of the frauds practised in our country. The law affecting the imports does not reach the adulterations practised at home. Indeed, the closure of the channel of foreign fraud had the effect of opening new avenues of mischief in the domestic trade, and the medicines brought from abroad were subjected to every species of dilution and admixture in the wholesale drug establishments of the large cities. Some action, looking to the increase of this evil at home, is imperatively demanded of the Association at its approaching meeting in New York. This subject has been already broached by one of the able committees of the Society two years ago, and we shall do no more than suggest the mischief, leaving the remedy to the doctors of the nation.

C. R. E.

Philadelphia, March 21, 1853.

NITRATE OF SILVER IN DYSPEPSIA OR CHRONIC GASTRITIS.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—During the last twenty years I have had many cases of inveterate dyspepsia or chronic gastritis. A long course of dieting, with occasional *pro re nata* medicines, has afforded partial relief only, in many cases. Some years ago, I used nitrate of silver and opium in cases attended by chronic diarrhœa, with success, and more recently I have used the same remedy when diarrhœa was only occasional and often absent. From the trials I have made and the success I have obtained, I think the nitrate promises to be a very useful remedy. My experience has not been large in the use of it as a remedy for dyspepsia; but in a few cases, and so far as I have made trials, it has acted with the promptness and certainty of quinine in ague. I begin with a pill containing a quarter of a grain of nitrate of silver and a quarter of a grain of opium, administered three times a-day. After using this quantity several days, I double the quantity of the nitrate, but not of the opium; and when opium is contraindicated, I omit it altogether. In some cases I gradually increase the nitrate to one grain (and even two grains in one instance) three times a-day. The remedy certainly deserves further trial, and my design in this short communication is to call the attention of the profession to an important subject, and to request others to try the remedy and note the results.

W. A. GILLESPIE, M.D.

Louisiana Co., Va., March 24, 1853.

SURGICAL CLINIC OF THE PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

WEDNESDAY, March 3.—This clinic, which is constantly growing in importance, presented, on the present occasion, many cases which were well calculated to evoke the skill of the officiating surgeon, Dr. Bryan, as well as to exemplify the triumph of the healing art in alleviating and removing the sufferings of humanity.

Among the cases presented to the class in attendance, were the following:—

I.—Miss M. A., Pine street, states that during the past two weeks she has suffered severe pain in left eye; feels a great repugnance to light; had tried various remedies, all of which were ineffectual, the pain still continuing to increase. On the evening of the 21st, this patient applying for aid at the Philadelphia Medical College, she was brought before Dr. Bryan, who, on examination, discovered several incipient ulcers of cornea. The vessels of the sclerótica surrounding the iris were turgid with blood, and the conjunctiva, through its entire extent, considerably inflamed. The diathesis of the patient and the character of the inflammation, led to the diagnosis that the case in question was one of scrofulous ophthalmia. She was directed to take, in divided doses, the following purgative. R. Sennæ, ʒ ss.; mannæ, ʒ ij.; magnesiæ sulphat., ʒ ij.; sem. anisi, ʒ j.; aquæ, Oj. As a collyrium—R. Zinci sulphat., grs. iv.; morphiæ sulph. gr. j.; aquæ distillat., ʒ ij. Admov. ter in die. A blister was applied to the temple as a contra-irritant. This patient now states that she feels considerably relieved, and is directed to continue same treatment until next clinic day.

II.—Mr. J. B., Pine street, a young man of 17, had applied at surgical clinic, some months ago, for surgical aid. On examination a tumor was found to project from the posterior nares, which caused indistinct articulation and impeded the respiration, especially during sleep. As there was nothing indicating that the tumor was of a malignant character, its excision was undertaken and accomplished by Dr. Bryan. Some time after, the patient again applied for relief, and on examination a new fungoid growth presented itself, exceeding in magnitude that previously extirpated. It extended from the most elevated point of the septum narium to within a few lines of the epiglottis, and was a source of great distress to the patient. In attempting the excision of this new tenant, it was discovered to be highly vascular, as it bled freely during the preliminary efforts for its removal. This occurrence suggested the propriety of having recourse to a different mode of treatment, i. e., its removal by ligature. This operation was performed to-day with every prospect of ultimate success. The difficulty experienced in passing the smallest instrument, armed with a ligature, from the anterior to the posterior nares was well calculated to test the perseverance and skill of the surgeon, but art and knowledge are omnipotent and must be successful. The ordinary ear catheter was used with a double ligature, to the end of which a piece of cat-gut was attached for the purpose of getting the ligature into the mouth from the posterior nares. The loop was passed over the

tumor, and the ends of the ligature fastened to the proximal extremity of the catheter, which was left in the nostril. No hæmorrhage followed, and the patient is now doing well.

III.—Mrs. J. S., 7th street. This lady had been suffering from whilow during a period of two months. This is her first application for advice at this institution. Whether as the result of bad treatment, or inattention on the part of the patient, the ulcerative process had destroyed all the soft parts on the inner aspect of the two distal phalanges of index finger of left hand. An amputation of the defunct parts was suggested to the patient, but she feels unwilling to submit to the operation.

IV.—C. R. Russell Vagus, now sojourning in this city, states that about a year ago he fell from a considerable height, the apex of the shoulder and side of the head being the points of impact. This patient is a man of great muscular development, and required the most erudite tact of the finger to ascertain the condition of clavicle and shoulder-joint. Having applied on yesterday, and being carefully examined at that time, the leading symptoms were discovered to be, inability to elevate the arm, pain at the insertion of the deltoid muscle, and at articulation of clavicle and humerus. The absence of that deformity which attends luxation of the joint, as well as fracture of clavicle and humerus, corroborated by the touch, led to the inference that the injury amounted simply to a severe contusion of the parts. Cups were applied to the vicinity of the articulation, and four ounces of blood abstracted. To-day the mobility of the arm is considerably improved. Some febrile excitement still continuing, the patient was directed to take of magn. sulph. ʒ ss., to be repeated *cras mane*, and to apply a blister to the parts.

Having disposed of the other cases in attendance, Dr. Bryan next drew the attention of the class to a new instrument of his own invention, to be used for the purpose of trephining. The many instruments already devised for this purpose, are all liable to one of two objections. Either they are difficult of application, or they are dangerous to the patient. These difficulties appear to be well obviated by the instrument in question. A subject being in readiness, Dr. Bryan proceeded at once to test the value of his invention. A flap being raised from the anterior inferior angle of one of the parietal bones, the instrument was applied, and in two minutes the required circle of bone was removed, without wounding a single fibre of the dura mater. The middle meningeal artery was seen ramifying in the exposed membrane, but the arterial coats continued intact. Thus at length have we obtained an instrument by which this operation can be executed *cito, tuto et jucunde*.

Philad. Coll. Med., March 24, 1853. JOHN F. J. SULLIVAN.

QUININE IN RHEUMATISM.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—While we are not disposed to deprive any man of his well-earned laurels, we are not sure it is the better policy to stand by and permit an

* A cut and description of this instrument may be seen in the first of April No. of the Philadelphia Medical and Surgical Journal.

other to ride into power upon the suggestions of his brother, without giving him credit for it. We are led to these remarks from noticing in your weekly edition of the 16th inst., an extract from a letter in the Charleston Medical Review, conferring upon M. Briquet the honor, we infer, of curing rheumatism combined with cardiac disease, by full doses of quinine. If it was the design of the writer to create the impression that M. Briquet was the author, or that the treatment was even novel, we beg him to be undeceived. If the writer will look into Dr. Reese's Gazette for 1850 or 51 (we speak from memory), he will find a case recorded of the successful management of rheumatism by full doses of quinine, with its suggestion in cardiac disease incident to rheumatism. We laid no claim to the discovery of the remedy; we were the first, we believe, to report it in this country, and we are the last man to permit another to steal "*our thunder*," or bear off our laurels, before our eyes, however unimportant they may be. The first patient we cured and reported for Dr. Reese is alive yet, and living not many miles from us, and can easily be found to testify to the cure. We recollect, not many years ago, Velpeau received great praise for suggesting *copperas water* in erysipelas, when actually every old woman in the South had used it years before he ever thought of it. We say this in no disparagement to the great Parisian, whose genius we admire, and whose ability it would be the height of folly for any man to deny. But it is a fact which cannot be too strongly and forcibly reprobated, that European physicians often secure renown for things which do not justly belong to them, and we are not sure our own countrymen are not to blame for it to some extent. We do not pretend to say that we are the discoverer of the quinine treatment in rheumatism; but we do say we have a better claim to it than M. Briquet, and we appeal to the Medical Journal referred to, to our medical brethren here, and we can maintain it by a most reputable surgeon of the United States Army from the State of South Carolina.

We hope the writer in the Charleston Review will take the matter in no unkind sense, for we act upon the square and adopt the motto—"*Let justice be done if the firmament fall*." We do not know that it is the design of the writer to convey the impression that the remedy and the practice are novel and original with Briquet, of Paris; but if it is, we have shown that he is laboring under an egregious error; and we can further say to him, that so far as progress in medicine is concerned—the Young Physic of the age, on this side the Savannah—it is not to be advanced "*by mousing owls to be hawked at and killed*," particularly by transatlantic birds.

Respectfully,

H. A. RAMSAY.

Thompson, Colum. Co., Geo., March 22, 1853.

BITE OF THE RATTLESNAKE.

BY THOMAS A. ATCHISON.

I WAS summoned in haste on the evening of the 20th of September, 1852, to see Miss R——, a young lady aged 17, living five miles in

the country, who (I was informed by the messenger), while taking a stroll in company with her mother, was bitten by a rattlesnake. I arrived at half past 7 o'clock, two hours and a half after the accident. I found my patient almost moribund, pulse wavy and scarcely perceptible at the wrist, surface cold and bathed in perspiration, face swollen, with a besotted expression, mind wandering, pupils dilated, could not see, declaring it was very dark although candles were burning in the room, asked frequently if it was not raining hard, although the night was calm and clear. Upon examination, I found that the bite had been inflicted upon the instep of the left foot; two little punctures were very perceptible, around which there was a greenish areola, with some puffiness.

Having heard of the marvellous efficacy of "spirits" in the relief of similar cases, I at once determined to give the remedy a full and fair trial. Reason and analogy sustained it. The nervous system was overwhelmed by a swift and deadly sedative poison, it must be supported by an equally powerful *diffusible* stimulant; accordingly I gave half a glass of whiskey, which was swallowed with avidity. Meanwhile the wound was freely scarified and cupped, and the extremities placed in a hot saline bath; twenty grains of carb. ammonia was then given, which was immediately thrown up, together with the contents of the stomach, colored a bright grass green. A common-sized glassful of whiskey was now given, the patient draining with eagerness the last drop, and begging with the energy of instinct for more; thus a glass of whiskey and twenty grains of carb. ammonia were given alternately every half hour, until three pints of the former and eighty grains of the latter were taken; and what is remarkable, not the slightest intoxication ensued; on the contrary the urgent and alarming symptoms gradually gave way, warmth was restored to the surface, the pulse returned to the wrist, the mind was called back from its wanderings, and she fell into a quiet sleep, from which she awoke at 5 o'clock, A.M., complaining of intense pain in the foot shooting up the inside of the leg to the knee. Ordered morphia, one fourth grain; fomentations of laudanum and camphor, followed by poultice of linum lini, with the effect of entire relief of pain. The following day castor oil was given to move the bowels; from that hour she suffered no further inconvenience from the bite.

The instinctive avidity and impunity with which this delicately-nurtured young lady took so large a quantity of spirits, sufficient under ordinary circumstances to have killed a regular *habitué*, would excite astonishment, if we did not reflect that it was antagonized by the depressing effect of the poison on the nervous system.

But the most interesting feature in this case remains to be stated: Miss R——, at the time she was bitten, was the subject of well-marked whooping cough, which was then epidemic in the neighborhood; she had had the disease about three weeks, consequently it was at its acme, but on recovering from the effects of the poison, to her great surprise and gratification her cough had disappeared also, nor did it return; being essentially a spasmodic disease, it was swept away by the powerful impression made upon the nervous system.—*Southern Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences.*

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, APRIL 6, 1853.

Trials and Rewards of the Medical Profession.—That veteran of surgery, Dr. Mussey, who has been prominent in the professorial chair, and eminent as a practitioner, now in the full strength of advancing age, while his honors are thick upon him, has embarked in a new enterprise. The Miami Medical College, located at Cincinnati, is altogether a new creation, and Dr. M. is the main pillar in sustaining the structure, as we understand the matter in this direction. At the opening of the first lecture session, in October last, as professor of surgery, Dr. Mussey delivered a discourse on the trials and rewards of the medical profession. No person can be more familiar with these matters than himself. Pithy illustrations of the phases of a physician's every-day intercourse, give a zest to the lecture. The whims of the sick; the ignorance of those assuming to be wise; the stupidity of some, the flattery of many practitioners, and their mean subservency to their inferiors for the sake of business, as pictured by him, are true to nature. The spirit and tendency of this essay are good. It recognizes the workings of a Divine Providence, not precisely in words, but in principle; and there is a truthfulness in his propositions, that the understanding acknowledges at sight. Dr. Mussey has a reputation that commands the respect of the best class of minds, and we hope that the frosts of age may approach him gently, and his last days be as happy as the morning and meridian of his professional career were peaceful and prosperous.

The Mother and her Offspring.—An occasional notice of the preparation of this treatise, by Stephen Tracy, M.D., formerly of the missionary service in China, has appeared in the Journal. Within a few weeks, it came from the press of the Harpers, in New York, in a neat and acceptable form. Several publishers in Boston had the refusal of the manuscript, but declined putting it in type, imagining, no doubt, that it would not be a very saleable production. If so, then it is the third work that has been recently rejected by them, either one of which, in a money-making point of view, would have been profitable. Dr. Tracy's book, it is confidently predicted, will have an immense run. While the plan is truly professional, it is calculated for popular circulation. There are twenty-three chapters, embracing the following leading topics, viz.:—indications of pregnancy; preservation of health during the period; preparations for confinement; re-production in vegetables; re-production in the lower animals; re-production in human beings; confinement; regimen of the nursing mother; washing and bathing infants; dressing of infants; clothing of infants; nourishment of them; wet nurses; weaning; diet after weaning; sleep of infants; exercise; mental influences; government and habits; intellectual culture; diseases of pregnancy; diseases occurring after confinement, and diseases of children. There are hundreds of subjects discussed in connection with these leading heads, comprising every condition of mother and child, through all periods of gestation, and from birth through the various stages of moral and physical training. Dr. Tracy is a charming writer. He

understands what is wanted, and has the ability to meet the demand. To write on these topics, and avoid technicalities on the one hand, and any shadow of grossness or vulgarity on the other, was a difficult undertaking. As it is, no fault can be found with the book, or the pure English in which it is dressed; and a high moral tone pervades its 361 pages. Although fitted to another meridian, medical students might glean knowledge from it, that would enable them to direct and to do many things appropriately, in the commencement of practice, which often devolve upon them. These semi-professional lucubrations do not interfere with the regular province of the physician; on the contrary, if they fall under the eye of sensible, reflecting persons, the effect is to increase their confidence in the resources of legitimate medicine, and in well-educated practitioners. The diffusion of elementary physiology among the masses, is absolute death to quackery.

Opium Trade.—A new edition of a sketch of the history, extent and effects of the opium trade in India and China, by Nathan Allen, M.D., of Lowell, Mass., is now before the public. Our views have not been changed in regard to the character of this able production, since we had occasion to speak of it some months ago. Dr. Allen has concentrated an immense amount of information from reliable sources, which lays open the great moral evils of the commerce in opium. It is absolutely horrible that a Christian nation like England, can persist in such wrong doing, with a full knowledge of the misery, poverty, degradation and destruction of life that invariably follow. A synopsis of the woes that cling to opium-smokers in China, would be too formidable for re-publication in any periodical, and those who would know the extent of suffering that belongs to an habitual use of the terrible drug, as exhibited on a grand scale in those countries, are confidently referred to Dr. Allen's publication, as the source of more correct information that can be found in so small a compass, in any author in the English language. Copies may be procured at Messrs. Mussey's, Ticknor's, and Fettridge's, in Boston.

Mysterious Agents.—Dr. Rogers, the learned and persevering author of a series of numbers on the philosophy of mysterious agents, has brought out No. III. which surpasses the two first in point of interest. No man has written more profoundly on the dynamic laws and their relations to man. Some of his facts, illustrative of propositions, almost bring ghosts into the room. Dr. Drury's account of the haunted house, and what he both saw and heard, in the hamlet of Willington, seem to have afforded Dr. Rogers a strong case. Ingenious as he is, we are not wholly convinced that his views are correct. As the work progresses, it becomes fascinating to a philosophical mind. The author proposes soon to bring out a volume on witchcraft, and to possess himself of all the facts touching its existence in New England. He has been diving into the archives of the State House, and has examined the original Court papers produced on the trial of the witches at Salem. A rare and curious production may therefore be anticipated.

Cosmography.—Little as medical men may have to do, in their daily business, with a history of the earth, it is far from being beneath their notice to watch the progress of general science, and especially that noble one,

astronomy. Still, we should not have gone far out of the legitimate course of our hebdomadal, to speak of a subject so vast, were it not that one of the brotherhood, a modest, retired practitioner, has suddenly surprised and delighted his acquaintances with a course of philosophical reflections on the formation of the solar system, accompanied by the promulgation of a new theory, that invests his deliberations with peculiar interest. Whenever a physician distinguishes himself in any department of knowledge, out of the common course of his orbit, he exalts the profession to which he belongs; and we have reason to be proud of the bright array of great names in the calendar of fame, that sprang from our ranks. Charles F. Winslow, M.D., of Waltham, Mass., formerly of Nantucket, and for many years a resident of the Sandwich Islands, has written a small volume, under the unobtrusive title of "*Cosmography; or Philosophical Views of the Universe*," that is calculated to give activity to the thoughts of one class of philosophers, the astronomers, if no others. He labors to develop and establish the theory, that repulsion is a planetary force. In the second part, the reader is presented with an analytical examination of the solar system, and the application of the theory of *repulsion* to the creation of the universe. Part third is intensely captivating, and embraces the consideration of the inequalities of the surface of the solid spheres, and the successive revolutions observed throughout the crust of the globe, as results of the alternating intensity of cosimical forces. Not daring to encroach largely, upon purely medical readers, topics which are in no way connected with the special objects of this Journal, we shall merely announce to those of them who cultivate a taste for general science, that Dr. Winslow has secured to himself an elevated position by this publication. He demonstrates the possession of a mind capable of grasping great thoughts, and of conducting inquiries of the loftiest import.

Atlas of Pathological Histology.—If the proposed international copyright becomes a law, re-published foreign works on medicine and surgery will be vastly enhanced in price. There is not a book worth having, of European origin, that cannot be purchased in the United States, when it comes out in an American dress, very much below the prices asked abroad. Joseph Leidy, M.D., of Philadelphia, is the translator of Dr. Gottlieb Gluge's "*Atlas of Pathological Histology*," which appears in a beautiful form, with double columns in folio, illustrated by copperplate engravings. Messrs. Blanchard & Lea are the publishers, and of course the typography is unexceptionable. The translator says of *Pathological Histology*—"its importance to pathological anatomy is of the same character as normal histology is to normal anatomy; and this cannot be better represented than by referring to the great and permanent advance which physiology has made in its relation to the physical structure of the organs of the living body. Pathological anatomy also is, beyond doubt, of the highest value in medicine, for a scientific treatment of disease must necessarily depend, to a very considerable extent, upon our knowledge of material changes which are so frequently the source of those symptoms which indicate its existence." Whoever sees this finished publication, will covet it. Copies are to be had at Ticknor's, Boston.

Penn Medical College.—What kind of an institution is it? One of its professors (Emeritus), resides in London; and another in New York.

The circular announcing a Spring session in Philadelphia, was printed at Providence, R. I. ! There is one grand feature in the prospectus, that might be profitably imitated by the venerables who have never acted energetically beyond securing their fees. It runs thus—viz., "The sessions of the Penn College will be full of interest to their close—for the several professors will not weary the students with speculative nothings, long drawn out, merely to occupy the hours daily assigned in the continuance of a longer term." The Penn College has learned one bad trick, copied from those who are older in the field,—the sale of matriculation tickets. In claiming attention and patronage on the score of peculiar moral qualifications, it would be a capital idea to renounce the unrighteous demand of five dollars under the name of *matriculation*. It is an indirect way of sponging the students. If legally tested, we apprehend that monies, thus collected, would necessarily have to be returned. The students pay for instruction, and not for keeping buildings in repair. They are not obliged to maintain fires, pay janitors or black the boots of the faculty.

Providence (R. I.) Bill of Mortality.—An orderly arranged annual abstract of the deaths occurring in the neighboring city of Providence, for the year 1852, has been published. It gives a grand total of 914, of which 199 were by consumption. Dysentery was the disease which swept off the next highest number—75; hydrocephalus 33, and typhoid fever 29. No epidemic appears to have been recognized in the time, and the mortality may be considered as no way extraordinary.

Naval Board of Medical Examiners.—Having carefully examined thirty-four applicants, they finally selected nine, who were the best qualified, and who will be commissioned assistant surgeons, as follows,—viz. : James H. Stuart, of Pennsylvania; J. Pembroke Thom, of Virginia; John M. Browne, of New Hampshire; John F. Taylor, of Delaware; Henry Clay Caldwell, of Virginia; Thos. J. Turner, of Pennsylvania; Wm. T. Hord, of Kentucky; Wentworth R. Richardson, of Massachusetts; A. Clarkson Smith, of Pennsylvania. Six others, already in commission, were found worthy of promotion—Wm. Lowber; P. J. Horwitz; B. Rush Mitchell; D. B. Phillips; James Hamilton; J. L. Burt.

Lunatic Asylum in the District of Columbia.—A site for a hospital for the insane of the District of Columbia and of the army and navy, has been purchased for \$25,000. It is situated about two miles south of the Capitol, and contains about 190 acres, nearly one half in a high state of cultivation. Congress appropriated \$100,000 for the site and buildings, and the latter will be erected when the plans have been properly examined and approved. Dr. Charles H. Nichols has been appointed superintendent.

New York State Lunatic Asylum.—This is a mammoth institution in its external appearance. In passing by, the traveller would be led to suppose the establishment was a fortress. Imperfection seems to be apparent even in this model lunatic asylum, as the managers state that ventilation was unprovided for in its original construction. It is remarkable that there should have been such a large amount of money expended to make this

asylum the very best in the Union, and at this late period the announcement be made that "*ventilation was unprovided for in the original construction of the buildings.*" Sixty thousand dollars are now asked of the Legislature for warming and ventilation. For one year, ending December 1, 1852, the receipts from all sources were \$80,001 35; and the outgoes the same. Whole number of patients during that time, 825; and the number of applicants greater than in any previous year. Sixty were refused, and in all, 75 citizens of the State had the doors closed upon them for want of accommodations. The medical superintendent suggests the erection of another hospital for two hundred patients, of the male sex only. He approves of having the sexes in distinct houses, accompanying the recommendation with proper and sufficient reasons. The medical report says that 156 recovered in 1852; 11 were much improved; 42 improved; 152 unimproved, and 39 died. Among the causes leading to the insanity of the inmates, 46 were made so by intemperance; 29 by spiritual rappings and popular errors; 23 by domestic trouble; and 40 by masturbation. Most of the physician's report is made up of details of items that are needed to better the asylum, together with remarks on the domestic management of the internal affairs of the institution.

Revalenta Arabica.—Considerable attention seems to have been given in England, to a new farinaceous compound, especially designed for the food of invalids and children, under the name of *revalenta arabica*, an agency for which has been recently established by Dr. Litchfield, at 215 Washington st., Boston. Without being at all influenced by the thousand and one certificates accompanying each package, testifying to the sovereign cures effected by it, it is sufficient to state the simple fact that the *arabica* food meets the approbation of those who have the care of the sick. Being easily digested, and highly nutritious, the demand is said to be large in Great Britain and on the continent. Dr. Litchfield would not, we think, have identified himself with a worthless preparation; and Dr. Ure has certified that it is a pure vegetable farina, perfectly wholesome, easily digestible, and likely to promote healthy action of the stomach and bowels, and thereby to counteract dyspepsia.

Use of Quinine in the Treatment of Rheumatism.—Dr. Ramsay has shown, on another page of the Journal of to-day, that he is entitled to the credit of having used quinine in rheumatism previous to the occurrence of the cases of M. Briquet, alluded to in the Journal of the 16th ult. Those cases, however, were not the first which M. Briquet has thus treated; as we perceive in the London Lancet of Jan. 14, 1843, a particular account of this mode of treatment both by Briquet and M. Devergie of the same Hospital (St. Louis). The latter objects to the employment of larger doses than from 15 to 30 grs. per diem of the sulphate. We mention this circumstance in accordance with the principle of the motto which Dr. Ramsay quotes—"Fiat justitia ruat cælum."

Monumental Stone.—A committee was raised at the last meeting of the American Medical Association, for the purpose of procuring a suitable stone, with an appropriate inscription, for insertion, in the name of the association, in the national monument to the memory of Washington, now in

progress in the City of Washington. Dr. Atlee, the Chairman, has issued a circular, soliciting a subscription of one dollar from each member, to be transmitted by mail, to Jno. L. Atlee, M.D., Lancaster, Penn.

State Lunatic Asylum for Western New York.—Governor Seymour, in his message to the Legislature, recommends the erection of another Lunatic Asylum in this State, to be located in its Western portion. A bill has been brought forward in the Senate in accordance with this recommendation. The necessity for increased accommodations is very urgent and ought not be delayed.—*American Journal of Insanity.*

Medical Miscellany.—The Quarterly Review, in answer to the question—"What is man?" says—"Chemically speaking, a man is forty-five pounds of carbon and nitrogen, diffused through five and a half pails full of water."—During the famine year of 1846 in Ireland, there were more marriages than ever before were registered in that country.—Orfila has given 8,000 francs to the Academy of Medicine for a biennial prize fund.—In the Pennsylvania Med. College, 56 recently graduated with M.D.; at the Kentucky Med. School, 39; Missouri University, 26; St. Louis, 33; and at the Maryland University, 59.—A woman in the Cincinnati Hospital presents the following appearance—Her legs are enormously enlarged, being over two feet in circumference at the ankles, and her body is swollen to the shoulders in even larger proportion, being not less than ten feet girth. Her disease commenced about three years since, and has now assumed a chronic form.—In the State of Georgia there is one Medical College, with six teachers and 150 students, who pay into its treasury some \$10,500.—Dr. Jedediah Miller, the lately appointed Health Commissioner of New York, has a salary of \$3,500.—They are determined to have a marine hospital at Burlington, Iowa.—A new medical theorist divides all diseases into two classes,—viz., those of which the patients die, and the other from which they recover.—A revolutionary soldier 104 years old, is on a visit at Cincinnati, from Richmond, Virginia.—A charter has been granted by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, for another medical college, called Chrono-Thermal, probably to be located in Philadelphia. The people of that State understand the art of concentrating medical power and influence, by accommodating all parties and shades of applicants.—At the Philadelphia Medical College, 27 recently took the degree of M.D. At the Homœopathic, 55; at the Pennsylvania, 55; and at the Jefferson, 223.—Public health is restored at Hayti—the yellow fever having entirely disappeared.

MARRIED.—D. E. Stillman, M.D., of Dover, N. Y., to Miss E. Wadsworth.—In Boston, E. Brown Sequard, M.D., of Paris, to Miss E. Fletcher.—In the Cherokee country, D. D. Hirschcock, M.D., to Miss M. Worcester.—At Syracuse, N. Y., Charles N. Germaine, M.D., to Mrs. Mary J. Johnson, both of Syracuse.

DIED.—In California, Dr. C. C. Abby, of Littleton, Vt. Dr. Duncan, late member of Congress.—At Danvers, Mass., Andrew Nichols, M.D., aged 70, a worthy man, and an eminent practitioner.—In Paris, M. Orfila, the celebrated chemist and toxicologist.

Deaths in Boston for the week ending Saturday noon, April 24, 80. Males, 45—females, 37. Inflammation of the bowels, 2—bronchitis, 1—congestion of brain, 1—inflammation of the brain, 2—burns and scalds, 2—cancer, 1—consumption, 10—convulsions, 1—croup, 6—dropsy, 3—dropsy in head, 5—drowned, 2—infantile diseases, 3—typhoid fever, 2—scarlet fever, 5—homicide, 1—hooping cough, 1—disease of the heart, 4—inflammation of the lungs, 12—marasmus, 2—old age, 6—palsy, 1—peritonitis, 1—teething, 5—tumor, 2.

Under 5 years, 36—between 5 and 20 years, 12—between 20 and 40 years, 10—between 40 and 60 years, 11—over 60 years, 11. Born in the United States, 67—Ireland, 9—England, 1—Scotland, 1—Switzerland, 1—So. America, 1. The above includes 4 deaths in the city institutions.

Surgical Operation on a Turkey.—H. G. Howe, Esq., of Lawrence, Mass., describes an operation performed by himself, which may be of use to growers of poultry, and is of interest also to surgeons. One of his turkeys was noticed for several weeks to be drooping, and was found to be likely to die. On examination, the crop was noticed to be full and hard, and it was determined to open it. The creature was secured, and with a sharp razor the skin of the breast was laid back, and the crop opened, which was found nearly bursting with *dried hay*, nearly a hat full of which was taken out. With a needle and thread of fine silk the opening was carefully sewed up; the turkey was then kept quiet for a few days in a warm box, with a little soft bread soaked in milk for food, when it was allowed to run at large and soon completely recovered.

South Carolina Asylum for the Insane.—At the last session of the Legislature of South Carolina, an appropriation of \$30,000 was made, for the purpose of erecting a new building or buildings for the accommodation of the insane patients in the State Institution of Columbia. In January last a committee was appointed from the Board of Regents, to report on the most serviceable manner of laying out this sum, and, from their printed report, we are glad to find that a proposition to give up the present Institution entirely, and to commence a new Hospital in the country, has been seriously entertained, although no definite action has yet been had on the subject.—*American Journal of Insanity*.

Commencement of the Female Medical College, Pennsylvania.—A large and fashionable audience graced the Musical Fund Hall, on the 27th Jan., at the commencement of this institution. The new President, Mr. Cleveland, who is a popular principal of a female academy in our city, conferred the degrees in Latin, after reading the diploma to the successful candidates (nine in number), for its honors. The "charge" was delivered by Dr. Cornell, Professor of Physiology. He performed his difficult task most successfully, and is evidently a practised public speaker. He referred, among other things, to the acknowledged physical inferiority of the American females, and urged on the lady-graduates to seek the cause and remedy of this great evil.—*Philadelphia Med. and Surg. Journal*.

We understand the above statement respecting the reading of the diplomas to the graduates is not correct. The portion of the President's remarks which was in Latin was addressed to the officers of the College, and the diplomas were very properly left for the graduates themselves to read.

Vital Statistics of Petersburg, Va.—A writer in the *Intelligencer*, of Petersburg, in some remarks upon a table of deaths for nine years, prepared by him, estimates the number of deaths by consumption during that time in that city to have averaged 15 and a fraction per year, or about 1 in 533 annually of the population. This disease stands at the head, as in most northern climates, of the causes of death. Next in number comes cholera infantum—126 in nine years. Pneumonia stands next—63 deaths in the same time; and pleurisy and affections of the bowels and brain next. Old age stands 10th on the list. As in other places where cholera has prevailed, it is perceived that in Petersburg the mortality was unusually low during the year succeeding its prevalence, being less than any year of the nine.